Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Data Processing Standard

Topic: Web Design Standards

Item: D

Status: Version 2.0

Updated: May 10, 2002

See also: Data Processing Policy 3:
Internet Roles and Responsibilities
Data Processing Standard F:
PDF Standards

This Standard was reviewed and approved

by:_____

Jeff Staake, Deputy Director
Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources

on:_____
Date

Introduction

The department publishes hundreds of Web pages compiled by many staff throughout the department. Departmental Web standards exist to:

- Facilitate consistency throughout our Web environment
- Ensure appropriate links, navigation and points-of-contact
- Limit the department's liability
- Facilitate a DNR identity for our entire Web environment

Web Audience

The department's intended Web audience consists of the general public, environmentalists regulated industry and individuals with special interests in history, nature and outdoor recreation.

File Name Extension

The department's HTML extension is .htm. This universal file extension can be used on PC-DOS based and Unix computers.

Font Standards

Font: Times New Roman
Font Size=3 for Body Text (Equivalent to 12 points)
Font Size=H2 for Headings (Equivalent to 18 points)
Font Size=H3 for Subheadings (Equivalent to 14 points)
Font Size=1 for Footer Text (Equivalent to 8 points)

State of Missouri Web Guidelines suggest using black with blue links for text. Colored text or different fonts may occasionally be used to show emphasis. However, avoid using more than two different fonts per document. A recommended alternate font is Arial or Century Gothic. Also, avoid using blues, reds, yellows and white text. With respect to different fonts, many are not supported on the Internet and should be used sparingly. Additional Internet standards call for mixed case with all uppercase only used for acronyms or abbreviations. The department will adhere to these standards for text and fonts.

Copyright Issues

The department respects all media copyright laws. You may choose royalty-free audio or video files or contact The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publications (ASCAP) or Broadcast Music Inc. to pay royalties to use a particular song or sound clip. Please reference **Audio Standards** and/or **Video Standards** mentioned in this document.

Document Content

1. **Web Page Titles**
    Every page should have a title tag <TITLE></TITLE>. The title could be an explanation similar to the heading of the page. The title should contain "MoDNR" somewhere in the tag and be short but informative (e.g., "MoDNR State Parks" is more descriptive than "Parks"; or "MoDNR Questions" or "MoDNR Air Pollution Questions" is more descriptive than "MoDNR FAQs." The text between the title tags does not appear in the body of the document. However, it is important because it frequently is used to identify the document in bookmarks, search results and site indexes. It also appears at the top of the browser window.

    The same applies to Lotus Notes documents. The title for Web pages should contain "MoDNR" somewhere in the tag and be explicit but not too long.

2. **Web Page Backgrounds**
    A background graphic may be used on department pages. The Statewide Web Guidelines Committee recommends a light color or white background. An attached design matrix provides guidelines for background images and colors.

3. **Web Page Headers**
    Web page headers consist of the logo/banner and the page title/heading (<H2). A graphic logo/banner should be centered on all pages just before the <H2> heading. An example of the banner, navigation and footer is attached as Appendix A. The same ALT tags (alternate text) should display throughout the department pages.

    The same applies to Lotus Notes documents. The main heading should be centered and at the top of all departmental pages.

4. **Navigation Panel**
    A department-wide navigation panel has been designed and should not be changed. The navigation makes it easier for constituents to browse through our pages by topic. The body of the page can be formatted in one or more columns as mentioned in section 3 of this standard. Examples of the banner, navigation and footer are attached as Appendix A.

5. **Web Page Subheaders**
    The division, program or topic heading should be listed under the main heading as a <H2> or <H3> size. The department's title should always be slightly larger or the same size as the division, program or topic title. The subheading should be centered.

6. **Document Body**

Standard text should be black with blue links as stated under **Font Standards** above. The document body may include graphics, text, charts, tables, columns and pictures. Document body content and design is subject to division information officer or Web Team review.

If another heading is used within the document body it should be <H3>.

7. **Web Page Footers**

The footer should be the same on all department pages. The departmental 1-800-361-4827 number will be the default contact for the department pages. The area code should be within parentheses as stated in the *Associated Press Stylebook*. The 800 number should be displayed the same as in our department magazine: 1-800-361-4827.

A generic e-mail account should be created for each division and/or program. The e-mail name should be no more than 15 characters for the first half of the name and shall not contain hyphens.

Examples are:
> moparks@mail.dnr.state.mo.us
> cleanwater@mail.dnr.state.mo.us
> modnr@mail.dnr.state.mo.us

These e-mail addresses must be displayed in the footer, and division and program name should be displayed when appropriate.

The automatically calculated last modified date is also included. The international standard and departmental date style is month day comma and year (i.e., February 11, 1998).

8. **Web Disclaimer**

The department's Web disclaimer statement must be linked from the footer of all departmental pages as shown above. The disclaimer statement has been officially approved by the department's executive staff.

9. **Tables**

The use of embedded tables within the document body of all departmental pages is acceptable. The basic text color should be black with blue links as stated in **Font Standards** (above). Colored tables may be used to show distinction. However, avoid using red, green or white table background. Black on red or vice versa and green on brown or vice versa are not visible to someone who is color impaired.

10. **Bullet Lists**

The use of bullet lists is wide spread on the Internet. When using a bullet list do not add color balls, triangles or any other graphic in place of the black ball that is automatic with the <li> tag.

Web Templates

Standard Web pages may be created via templates. Department Web page templates are available from the Web manager.

HTML Comments

Web maintainers may insert comments into HTML code to serve as documentation for subsequent Web maintainers. An example of the comment HTML code is:

<!—Your comment goes here. -->

Images/Graphics

Graphics may be used to enhance subject matter. Images should be kept small but recognizable, and should not take long to download using a 14,400-bps modem. Save image files to a Web graphic format such as GIF or JPG. Use GIF for black and white and flat color images. Use JPG for continuous-tone images (photographs) at either medium or low and for gradations (medium). Save images in interlaced format (gif87a or 89a format) for faster display. Set mode as indexed color format to restrict the colors in the image palette to 256 or less. Set palette to adaptive/diffusion to reduce dithering or color distortion by the browser. All pages should use the ALT (alternative text) attribute to attach text to a graphic for non-graphical browsers or browsers with graphics turned off. Graphics should not exceed 599 pixels in width to accommodate the minimum screen width setting. All graphics should be saved as transparent GIFs for easier readability.

If an image does not adhere to the column format for the document body, an additional page can be created that consists of the header, footer and larger graphic only. These pages are exceptions to this standard and should be approved by the DNR Web Team or Web manager.

All charts or maps should be "edited" to take out the department logo, department, division or program name, and any other information that is in the heading or subheading of the Web page. Some other type of text may be added to the GIF or JPG that recognizes the department, should the graphic be used in another context. A recommended text is: MoDNR 8-18-1996 Landfill Facilities.

Animated Graphics

To facilitate the appropriate use of resources, animated graphics require Web manager or DNR Web Team approval. The use of animated graphics that loop continuously or blink can be annoying to the reader. Also, screen readers for the visually impaired may have difficulty interpreting the text.

Screen Design Size

To reduce the need to scroll horizontally across the bottom of the screen, pages should be designed at 600 or 760 pixels wide.

Frames

The frames capability is not a DNR standard. Readers often have difficulty navigating frames.

Audio Files

The most common file formats for audio files are AU, WAV, AIFF and MIDI. The DNR Web manager should approve the use of any audio files. Please refer to **Copyright Issues** above for additional information.

Video Files

The most common file formats for video files are MPEG, AVI and QuickTime. The DNR Web manager should approve the use of any video files. Please refer to **Copyright Issues** (above) for additional information.